



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Nurses Need Self-Care

COVID-19 will make a lasting impact on our nursing workforce

May is Nurses Month and the Texas Nurses Association and Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses are making sure that nurses have the tools they need to stay healthy — physically and mentally — during the COVID-19 pandemic. To best care for patients, nurses must care for themselves.

“Nurses often say that caring for others is a calling,” says Cindy Zolnierek, nurse and chief executive officer of TNA and TPAPN. “Across the state and nation, nurses have sacrificed time with their families, sleep and food while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.” However, nurses are highly vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder and fatigue.

While much of the public focus has been on producing and securing personal protective equipment to shield nurses from the virus that causes COVID-19, nurses and their families must also be aware of the long-lasting mental effects of working in a crisis situation.

“Nurses may expend themselves emotionally as they care for patients, witness patients battling illnesses and grieve patients who die,” says Zolnierek. “This strain is called compassion fatigue, and it can lead to emotional, mental and physical exhaustion.”

Nurses in crisis situations can also experience an emotional conflict called moral distress. When nurses know what they need to do to provide ethical care but find themselves unable to do it because of supply shortages, rules and regulations, or other barriers, they can experience an internal crisis.

For nurses, self-care must be deliberate and ongoing. Acknowledging and identifying situations that cause compassion fatigue and moral distress lets nurses take steps to protect themselves emotionally and mentally. Simply by choosing to take breaks, going for a walk or sticking to a routine, nurses can help prevent stress and PTSD.

TNA and TPAPN are offering multiple ways for nurses to get support this week, including Nurse Chats led by a nurse peer support facilitator, interactive stress management webinars and free self-care wallet cards. (Employers can place an order for wallet cards in sets of 50 by emailing tpapn@texasnurses.org with the quantity needed.)



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Nurses can find other self-care resources at texasnurses.org, including the award-winning Care for the Caregiver program, which empowers nurses to understand their vulnerability to stress and PTSD and how to prepare and be resilient.

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About Texas Nurses Association

The Texas Nurses Association (TNA) is a statewide membership-based professional association of registered nurses. Our vision is to empower Texas Nurses to advance the profession. Founded in 1907, TNA is the oldest and largest nursing association in Texas.

About Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses

The Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN) safeguards patients by providing early identification, support, monitoring, accountability and advocacy to Texas nurses who have an identified substance use disorder or mental health condition or related incident, so the nurse may return to safe nursing practice.